

Ch 6 Work, Life and Leisure

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Write in Brief

1. Give two reasons why the population of London expanded from the middle of the eighteenth century.

Answer

→ The city of London was a magnet for the migrant populations due to the job opportunities provided by its dockyards and industries. By 1750, one out of every nine people of England and Wales lived in London. So, the population of London kept expanding through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. → During the first world war, London began manufacturing motor cars and electrical goods. This increased the number of large factories, which in turn increased the number of people coming to the city in search of work.

2. What were the changes in the kind of work available to women in London between the nineteenth and the twentieth century? Explain the factors which led to this change.

Answer

Changes in the kind of work available to women in London between the nineteenth and the twentieth century were primarily based on industrial and technological advancements.

Consequently, women had to work in households for a living, and this led to an increase in the number of domestic servants. Some women also began to earn by lodging out rooms, tailoring, washing or making matchboxes. With the coming of the First World War though, women once again joined the industrial sector.

3. How does the existence of a large urban population affect each of the following? Illustrate with historical examples. (a) A private landlord (b) A Police Superintendent in charge of law and order (c) A leader of a political party

Answer

(a) A private landlord benefits by increasing the rent and he has more control over the price. The rising population would lead to increasing demand for space, e.g. renting of buildings at high rates were common in London and Bombay.

(b) Anyone involved with law and order would find it difficult with increasing population in urban areas. He would have to work hard to maintain law and order as crime rates are usually high in cities. For example, London people employed policemen to curb the rising crimes during night.

(c) Political leaders would have more people voting and hence more responsibilities. In cities, masses of people could be drawn to the political causes as it happened in the Bloody Sunday of November, 1887 in London. The metropolitan character of cities would compel him/her to be more secular and liberal on the one hand. On the other hand, extremism or conservatism might also win them votes as a reactionary phenomenon, e.g. rise of Nazis in Germany or Liberal Democrats in France.

4. Give explanations for the following: (a) Why well-off Londoners supported the need to build housing for the poor in the nineteenth century. (b) Why a number of Bombay films were about the lives of migrants. (c) What led to the major expansion of Bombay's population in the mid-nineteenth century.

Answer

(a) Well-off Londoners supported the need to build housing for the poor in the nineteenth century on account of three reasons:

→ one-room houses of the poor came to be seen as the breeding ground of diseases, and hence, a threat to public health

→ Fire hazards became a worry in these over-crowded, badly ventilated, unhygienic homes

→ There was a widespread fear of social disorder, especially after the 1917 Russian Revolution. Housing schemes were undertaken to avoid a rebellion by the poor.

(b) Bombay became an attractive destination for people seeking jobs after the British administration replaced Surat with Bombay as its principal western port. The consequent increase in trade and industries led to a great influx of people. Thus, migrants were (and still are) an important facet of Bombay. Most of the people in the film industry were migrants themselves, and wanted to portray the plight of this class of people through films. Thus, a number of Bombay films were about the lives of migrants.

(c) In mid-seventeenth century, Bombay became East India Company's principal western port, replacing Surat. Later, by the end of the nineteenth century, it had become an important administrative as well as industrial centre. All through these years, the prospects for trade and commerce, and employment kept increasing, thereby making Bombay an attractive destination for migrants.

Discuss

1. What forms of entertainment came up in nineteenth century England to provide leisure activities for the people.

Answer

There were many forms of entertainment came up in nineteenth century England:

→ For the upper classes, an annual "London Season" comprised of opera, the theatre and classical music events was one of the sources of leisure.

→ For the working classes, pubs, discussions and meetings for political action served the same purpose.

→ Libraries, art galleries and museums were new types of entertainment brought about through the utilisation of state money.

→ Music halls and cinema theatres too became immensely popular with the lower classes.

→ Industrial workers were encouraged to undertake seaside vacations to rejuvenate from the banes of working in the polluting environment of factories.

2. Explain the social changes in London which led to the need for the Underground railway. Why was the development of the Underground criticised?

Answer

The development of suburbs as a part of the drive to decongest London led to the extension of the city beyond the range where people could walk to work. Though these suburbs had been built, the people could not be persuaded to leave the city and stay far away from their places of work in the absence of some form of public transport. The Underground railway was constructed to solve this housing problem. It was criticized initially because:

→ A newspaper reported the danger to health and asphyxiation (lack of air) and heat.

→ It was referred to as iron monsters, which added to the mess of the city. Charles Dickens in 'Dombey and Son' described its destructive process in construction.

→ About 900 houses were destroyed to make two miles of railways.

3. Explain what is meant by the Haussmanisation of Paris. To what extent would you support or oppose this form of development? Write a letter to the editor of a newspaper, to either support or oppose this, giving reasons for your view.

Answer

Haussmanisation of Paris refers to the forcible reconstruction of cities to enhance their beauty and impose order. The poor were evicted from the centre of Paris to reduce the possibility of political rebellion and to beautify the city.

4. To what extent does government regulation and new laws solve problems of pollution? Discuss one example each of the success and failure of legislation to change the quality of

(a) public life

(b) private life

Answer

Government laws play an important role in controlling the rates of pollution in a city. However, simply passing laws is not enough. They need to be properly enforced as well. It is also a fact that people tend to find ways of getting around laws. So, apart from legislations, government also needs to carry out intensive public awareness programmes aimed at educating the public about the need and ways of controlling pollution; and about how they too have a stake in environmental governance.

Public Life:

- Failure: The Underground railway enhanced transport, but caused the demolition of many houses, rendering their inhabitants homeless.
- Success: The British state used public funds to provide for entertainment forms such as museums, art galleries and libraries for the working classes.

Private Life:

- Failure: The availability of one-room tenements and no housing facilities for a major part of the industrial revolution time period caused the family to get divided into smaller units. There were even cases where rural people had to leave their families behind and live alone in the urban areas where they worked.
- Success: British administrative officials built houses in new suburbs for fulfilling the housing needs of the working classes.